



NA Speaker re-affirms strong Pakistan-Maldives ties



Pakistan, Portugal step up cooperation on Youth Jobs, Labour Mobility



Netherlands' envoy calls on Governor Punjab

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PM Shehbaz hails FBR's anti-smuggling drive, orders tougher action against tax evasion

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister, Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday chaired a weekly performance review meeting of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), lauding recent anti-smuggling operations and directing authorities to further intensify action against tax evasion and illicit trade.

During the meeting, the prime minister was briefed on progress made by the FBR in curbing smuggling and related enforcement measures. He said that smuggling annually causes losses of billions of rupees to the national exchequer, stressing that decisive action was essential to safeguard the country's economic interests, a Prime Minister's Office news release said. The prime minister

commended the role of Pakistan Customs and said successful enforcement operations had led to a significant reduction in smuggling, calling the results encouraging and commendable. He noted that due to effective measures, several commodities that were previously smuggled were now being imported through legal channels and had become part of the formal economy. The prime minister directed that efforts against tax evasion be further accelerated, reiterating that no leniency would be shown in cases involving smuggling or tax fraud. He also instructed provincial governments to extend full cooperation to the FBR in taking legal action against illegal petrol pumps. The officials informed the meeting that an integrated customs.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting regarding FBR.

Dr Yasmin Rashid, Mian Mahmood, Ejaz Ch. sentenced to 10 years in May 9 case



PEAK POINT

LAHORE: An anti-terrorism court (ATC) in Lahore has sentenced PTI leaders Dr Yasmin Rashid, Mian Mahmood Rashid, Ejaz Chaudhry, and Umar Sarfaraz Cheema to 10 years in prison each in connection with the May 9 case. The special ATC announced its reserved verdict at Kot Lakhpat Jail in another case related to vandalism at the GOR Gate on May 9. The court handed down 10-year sentences to Dr Yasmin Rashid, Mian Mahmood Rashid, Ejaz Chaudhry, and Umar Sarfaraz Cheema, while acquitting Shah Mahmood Qureshi in the GOR Gate vandalism case. During the trial, final statements of 21 accused, including Dr Yasmin Rashid, were recorded. The prosecution presented 56 witnesses before the court. ATC Judge Manzoor Ali Gul delivered the verdict at Kot Lakhpat Jail. According to army and police records, the accused damaged security cameras.

India's weaponization of water could trigger humanitarian crisis in Pakistan: Dar

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar on Friday said that India's unlawful and unilateral abeyance of the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) clearly exemplified the weaponization of water, which had all the potential to trigger a humanitarian crisis in Pakistan. The deputy prime minister, addressing the members of the diplomatic corps here, expressed serious concerns over the "unusual and abrupt" variations and unilateral release of water in the River Chenab by India twice this year during April 30 to May 21, 2025 and in the past week from December 7 to 15.

"India's manipulation of water, at a critical time hydrological data, and joint oversight required



of our agriculture cycle, directly threatens the lives and livelihoods, as well as food and economic security of our citizens...Such illegal and irresponsible Indian conduct has all the potential to trigger a humanitarian crisis in Pakistan," Dar said. He told the diplomatic community that India had also halted sharing advance information, by the Treaty, which had exposed Pakistan to floods and droughts. Highlighting India's unilateral abeyance of the Treaty in gross contravention of international law, especially Article 26 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, the deputy prime minister said that Pakistan was currently witnessing "material breaches" by India strik-

ing at the heart of the IWT with escalating consequences both for regional stability and sanctity of international law. He said that India had released water without any prior notification or any data or information sharing with Pakistan, as required under the treaty. "India's manipulation of water has prompted our Indus Water Commissioner to write a letter to his Indian counterpart seeking clarification on the matter, as provided for under the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT), asking India to respond to the queries and refrain from any unilateral manipulations of river flows. Ishaq Dar said that India had consistently attempted.

4 militants killed as security forces' camp comes under attack in NW's Boya

PEAK POINT

NORTH WAZIRISTAN: Four terrorists were killed after they attacked the battalion headquarters of security forces in Boya area on Friday, security sources said. The sources identified the terrorists as those belonging to Fitna-al-Khawarij, a term that the state has designated for the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan. One of the "suicide bombers" rammed the terrorists rammed an explosives-laden vehicle into a wall of the Boya fort on Friday morning, causing a blast, the sources said. The powerful blast.

5.7 magnitude earthquake strikes Afghanistan's Hindu Kush region

PEAK POINT

AFGHANISTAN: A strong 5.7-magnitude earthquake struck Afghanistan's Hindu Kush region early Friday, according to the German Research Center for Geosciences. The quake took place at 0539GMT with an epicenter 61 kilometers (38 miles) from the northern city of Kunduz and a shallow depth of 10 km (6.2 mi). There were no immediate reports of casualties or damage. Last month, at least 27 people were killed when a strong 6.3 magnitude earthquake struck northern Afghanistan provinces.

UN report clears Pakistan of Pahalgam attack, questions India's operation Sindoor

PEAK POINT

NEW YORK: A United Nations special experts' report has concluded that Pakistan was not involved in the Pahalgam attack and that India's military action, referred to as Operation Sindoor, constituted a violation of international law. The UN has formally sought explanations from India regarding its actions.

In their report, UN special experts strongly condemned the Pahalgam attack and emphasized that those responsible must be brought to justice in accordance with the law. At the same time, the experts highlighted that Pakistan denied any involvement in the incident and consistently called for an independent, transparent, and impartial

investigation. According to the UN Security Council under Article 51



report, on 7 May 2025, India used force within Pakistan's territory under Operation Sindoor. The experts stated that this use of force violated the UN Charter, as India failed to meet the necessary legal requirements for invoking self-defense. The report noted that India did not formally

notify the UN Security Council under Article 51 Pahalgam attack. The report reaffirmed that Pakistan officially condemned the Indian military action on 7 May 2025 and informed the Security Council that it reserved the right to self-defense under Article 51.

The report raised serious concerns over the humanitarian impact of Indian strikes, stating that civilian areas were targeted, mosques were damaged, and multiple civilians were killed or injured. The experts warned that unlawful use of force could amount to violations of the right to life under international human rights law.

UN experts emphasized that there is no recognized independent right to use unilateral military force in the name of counterterrorism.

Falak Javed, others indicted in Azma Bokhari fake video case

PEAK POINT

LAHORE: The Judicial Magistrate of District Court Lahore, Naem Watto has indicted Falak Javed, Atiq Riaz, and others in the fake video case involving Punjab Information Minister Azma Bokhari.

During the court proceedings, all six accused were presented before the magistrate. The charges were read out in open court from the challan submitted by the National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA). However, the accused denied committing the alleged offenses. Following their plea, the court formally indicted them, initiating the next phase of the legal process. The case involves allegations that the accused deliberately circulated a fake video of the provincial minister, causing reputational harm. The court also summoned the witnesses for the next hearing to provide testimony and evidence in the matter. Lawyers representing the complainant emphasized the importance.





SPORTS



Abdul Subhan stars against Bangladesh as Pakistan set up U-19 Asia Cup title clash against India



PEAK POINT
BANGLADESH: Pacer Abdul Subhan spearheaded a dominant all-round display as Pakistan Under-19s cruised into the final of the ACC Men's U-19 Asia Cup with an emphatic eight-wicket victory over defending champions Bangladesh at The Sevens Stadium in Dubai on Friday.

The rain-hit second semi-final was reduced to 27 overs a side, and Pakistan skipper Farhan Yousaf's decision to field first proved decisive as Bangladesh were bundled out for 121 in 26.3

Subhan led the charge with a probing spell of 4-20, accounting for key batsmen Azizul Hakim and Kalam Siddiki to leave Bangladesh reeling.

Huzaifa Ahsan offered excellent support with figures of 2-10, while Ali Raza and Mohammad Sayyam chipped in with a wicket apiece.

Samuun Basir was the lone resistance for Bangladesh with a 33-run knock before being run out at the close of the innings.

Pakistan's chase was briefly checked when wicket-keeper-batter Hamza Zahoor fell for a

duck, but opener Sameer Minhas ensured there were no further alarms.

The right-hander anchored the innings with a composed unbeaten 69 off 57 balls, striking six fours and two sixes. He added 85 runs for the second wicket with Usman Khan, who scored a brisk 27 before falling lbw to Samuun.

Ahmed Hussain stayed with Minhas till the end as Pakistan reached 122 for two in just 16.3 overs, sealing victory with 63 balls to spare.

Subhan was named player of the

match for his incisive bowling performance.

Pakistan will now meet India in Sunday's final at the ICC Academy Ground, setting up a high-profile clash between the traditional rivals.

Brief scores:
BANGLADESH U-19 121 in 26.3 overs (Samuun Basir 33; Abdul Subhan 4-20, Huzaifa Ahsan 2-10); **PAKISTAN U-19** 122-2 in 16.3 overs (Sameer Minhas 69 not out, Usman Khan 27).

PCB set to take control of Multan Sultans after ownership agreement expires



ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) is expected to take over the management of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) franchise Multan Sultans in 2026, following the expiry of the current ownership contract on December 31, 2025, according to official sources.

PCB officials said a final policy decision is likely within the next week. Under the proposed arrangement, the PCB would run the Multan Sultans for one season before offering the franchise to a new owner through an auction in 2027, as reported by The News on Friday.

If the plan moves forward, the PCB could save approximately \$4 million during that year by avoiding payments of \$3 million from the central revenue pool and an additional \$1 million in sponsorship funds. However, an audit report points out that the PCB would also forgo the annual franchise fee of \$8.5 million for that season.

In November, Multan Sultans owner Ali Tareen announced on social media that he was stepping away from the franchise. Sources say relations between the PCB and Ali Tareen had been strained for over a year, eventually breaking down completely.

KPK's Danish Sikandar, WAPDA's Mehwish Ali Claim Junior Squash Titles



SPORTS REPORTER
KARACHI: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Danish Sikandar and WAPDA's Mehwish Ali clinched the boys' under-15 and girls' singles titles respectively at the 4th McDonald's National Junior Squash Championship. In other categories, Pakistan Air Force's Abdul Rehman Riaz won the boys' under-11 title, while Sindh's Muhammad Aban

emerged champion in the under-9 category. Organised by the Sindh Squash Association, the President Adnan Asad, distributed trophies and prize money among the winners. Also present were Director of Finance Itfikhur Ahmed, Divisional Manager Marketing Muaz Hanif, SSA Secretary Naveed Rehman, Tournament Referee Muhammad Naseem, and other officials. According to

the results, Danish Sikandar defeated fellow Khyber Pakhtunkhwa player Abdul Hadi Gul in the boys' under-15 final in straight games, winning 11-6, 11-8, 11-0 in a 17-minute match. In the girls' under-19 final, top seed Mehwish Ali of WAPDA overcame Sindh's Damiya Khan 3-0. Damiya put up a strong fight in the opening game, but Mehwish dominated the next two to seal the title with scores of 13-11, 11-4, 11-8. The boys' under-11 final witnessed a tough contest as PAF's Abdul Rehman Riaz defeated his departmental teammate Anas Rafi 3-2. The match score read 11-6, 11-8, 8-11, 12-14, 11-6.

Pakistan to face West Indies in two-Test WTC Series next July



Master Paints Black edge Balochistan in sudden-death thriller at Lahore Open Polo

PEAK POINT
LAHORE: Master Paints Black defeated Team Balochistan by 7-6 in extra time on sudden death on the third day of the 14th Lahore Open Polo Championship 2025 - Patrons Cup, organised by the Lahore Polo Club.

The thrilling encounter kept spectators on the edge of their seats as both teams displayed high-quality polo throughout the match. Regulation time ended in a draw, forcing the game into extra time, where Master Paints Black secured the winning goal to clinch a dramatic victory. For Master Paints Black, Ignacio Javier Bello delivered an outstanding performance by scoring four goals, while Muhammad Ali Malik contributed two goals and Syed Turab Muhammad Rizvi added one goal to the team's tally. On the other side, Team Balochistan's Marcos Rivarola was the standout

player, scoring an impressive five goals, while Omar Asjad Malhi added one goal.

A large number of spectators and families were present at the Lahore Polo Club to witness the exciting contest. Club Secretary Major (R) Amjad Ghafoor and several prominent polo players were also in attendance. The championship action will continue on Friday, with three matches scheduled for the day. The first match will begin at 12:00 pm, followed by the second at 1:30 pm, and the third at 2:00 pm.



PESHAWAR: Volleyball players smash the ball to score points during the Annual Sports Gala-2025 at Peshawar Model Degree College Boys, Dalazak.



Maroof International Hospital celebrates christmas, strengthening bonds of Unity and Interfaith Harmony

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Maroof International Hospital (MIH) marked the joyous occasion of Christmas with a heartfelt Cake Cutting Ceremony, celebrating the values of unity, compassion, and interfaith harmony that define its institutional culture. Addressing the gathering as Chief Guest, Mr. Mohd Syafiq Firdous, Deputy Head of Mission,



Malaysian High Commission, lauded Maroof International Hospital for fostering an environment rooted in inclusivity, mutual respect, and cultural

understanding. He emphasized that such celebrations go beyond tradition, serving as powerful reminders that diversity is a strength and har-

mony is essential for a progressive society. Extending warm Christmas greetings to the MIH family, he appreciated the hospital's commitment

to bringing people together across faiths and backgrounds. Following the Chief Guest's remarks, Mr. Haroon Naseer, Chief Executive Officer, MIH, shared his Christmas wishes and paid tribute to the unwavering dedication and teamwork of MIH's staff. He reaffirmed that respect for diversity, compassion, and interfaith harmony remain core values at the heart of Maroof International

Hospital's mission and work-place culture. The event was further honored by the presence of the Chairman and Mrs. Chairman, whose participation underscored the leadership's continued support for unity and inclusivity. As a gesture of goodwill and appreciation, the management presented cash souvenirs to staff members celebrating Christmas.

Only 4% conviction rate: Senate declares gender based violence a crime against the state

NADEEM TANOLI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Senate has issued a blunt indictment of the country's justice system, warning that gender based violence has reached crisis proportions as convictions languish at around four percent despite years of laws, policies, and public commitments. The Senate Functional Committee on Human Rights declared that violence against women and children must be treated as a crime against the State, not a private or family matter, and demanded urgent structural reforms to end what members described as institutional failure and impunity. The hard hitting stance emerged during a meeting of the Senate Functional Committee on

Human Rights chaired by Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri, where members symbolically wore orange scarves to signal zero tolerance for gender-based violence. Lawmakers unanimously rejected cosmetic responses, stressing that symbolism must translate into accountability across policing, prosecution, and the courts. Opening the debate, Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri warned that gender-based violence is not only a criminal offence but also a severe mental health emergency, particularly for women and children trapped in violent households. She said children raised amid abuse often carry deep psychological trauma into adulthood, perpetuating cycles of violence. She criticized

police stations and prosecution offices for operating as procedural checkpoints rather than safe spaces, arguing that survivors are routinely re-traumatized by the very institutions meant to protect them. The chairperson expressed grave concern over conviction rates that remain stuck near four percent, calling it proof that the justice system is failing survivors, not the other way around. She said a society where women and daughters remain unsafe reflects a collapse of state responsibility and social justice, adding that justice cannot depend on a victim's resilience, financial means, or family pressure. State protection and enforcement, she stressed, must be automatic and uncompromising. Senator Sherry Rehman described the

figures for rape, honour killings, and kidnapping as "nationally indefensible," pointing to victim blaming, social tolerance of violence disguised as honour, and a chronic gap between legislation and enforcement. She called for mandatory recording of survivor statements, independent audits of investigations and prosecutions, and strict limits on compromises in serious gender-based violence cases. Senator Qurat ul Ain Marri said survivors are repeatedly abandoned by the criminal justice system, noting that compromised cases often push victims back into the same violent environments they escaped. She said low conviction rates reflect institutional collapse across the entire justice chain, from police investigations to

courtroom delays, rather than underreporting by victims. Officials from the Ministry of Human Rights informed the committee that reported cases of gender-based violence have risen sharply in recent years, particularly domestic violence cases. While improved laws have encouraged reporting, convictions have failed to improve. Provincial representatives cited weak investigations, evidentiary failures, pressure on victims, prolonged trials, and lack of witness protection as key obstacles to justice. The committee rejected piecemeal fixes and directed the Human Rights Division to form a dedicated committee to collect inputs from all stakeholders and submit consolidated, actionable recommendations.

These will focus on victim-sensitive policing, prosecution reforms, forensic strengthening, survivor and child mental health support, and state-led protection mechanisms. The Senate formally adopted these directions as its final decision on the motion addressing gender-based violence. Concluding the session, Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri warned that unless gender-based violence is treated as a crime against the State with coordinated federal and provincial action, Pakistan will continue to fail its most vulnerable citizens. She said improving conviction rates is not optional but essential to restoring public trust and delivering justice.

Opinion & Editorial



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K-P's case for a fair share in 11th NFC award

DR SYED AKHTAR ALI SHAH

As the federal and provincial governments approach the 11th National Finance Commission (NFC) award, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa is not seeking favour; it is demanding fairness. The province has absorbed the former Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), carried the burden of protracted conflict and inherited widespread underdevelopment. That its share in the divisible pool remains tethered to a 2009 formula is not just inequitable; it betrays the constitutional spirit of equitable federalism.

The districts merged from FATA into K-P are among Pakistan's most underdeveloped areas. Multi-dimensional poverty in these newly merged districts highlights severe deficits across income, living conditions, utilities, education and women's empowerment. Female literacy in many merged districts ranges between 12-17 per cent, far below the provincial average of roughly 37 per cent. Health infrastructure remains critically low: hospital beds and doctor-to-patient ratios are far below K-P norms, with many facilities lacking electricity, water, essential medicines and qualified staff. Economic deprivation is stark.

Prolonged conflict, trade embargoes with Afghanistan and insecurity have shuttered hundreds of businesses, including 229 industrial units reported closed in recent years. Per capita income in

these districts lags significantly behind settled districts, with households facing extreme poverty, limited livelihood opportunities and high out-of-school rates. These indicators reveal why the merged districts require sustained and enhanced federal transfers.

Even before the merger, educational indicators were alarming. Female literacy in some ex-FATA districts was as low as 7.8 per cent, and primary and secondary school enrollment was extremely low for girls. Across K-P, literacy rates show persistent gender gaps: overall provincial literacy is approximately 51 per cent, with female literacy roughly 37 per cent. The merged districts drag down these averages, reflecting decades of neglect. To meet constitutional obligations, K-P must invest heavily in schools, teachers and remedial programmes in these areas. Healthcare access is also critically low. Many health facilities were damaged or destroyed during the conflict, with staffing levels insufficient for maternal, child and general healthcare. Addressing these deficits requires major investment: new hospitals, medical staff, equipment, medicines and preventive health services. NFC allocations must reflect this urgent need. The economic consequences of prolonged conflict, trade disruptions and structural underdevelopment have been severe. Closure of trade routes and embargoes with Afghanistan

disrupted livelihoods, reduced provincial revenue and constrained commerce, sustaining thousands of households. The industrial sector suffered: hundreds of units were forced to close, including 229 reported industrial closures in recent years. This economic damage compounds social deprivation, forcing K-P to spend more on social protection and development. Even after large-scale counter-terrorism operations, K-P bears ongoing security costs: surveillance, policing, rehabilitation, reconstruction of infrastructure and cross-border management. Thousands of schools, hospitals, roads and markets were damaged or destroyed, while families lost homes, income, and hope. The previous one per cent "war-on-terror" grant assumed temporary costs. The reality is that ongoing security, reconstruction and social rehabilitation continue to strain the provincial budget. The social and economic cost of terrorism has long-term developmental repercussions. The 18th Amendment mandated decentralisation: the federal government should focus only on its constitutionally mandated domains. Yet, 15 years on, Islamabad continues as if little has changed. Seventeen federal divisions and 60 attached departments were supposed to close post-devolution but the federal government retains them, inflating expenditure and creating distrust.

Courtesy Tribune

Building research capacity

FAISAL BARI

LITERATURE on teacher impact shows that good teaching provides a significant delta on student learning, compared to average or poor teaching. Simply put, teachers matter and good teaching is important for ensuring better learning outcomes.

However, recruiting, motivating, and keeping good teachers gainfully and efficiently employed is not easy. In Pakistan, a couple of decades back, teacher recruitment was seen as having too much discretion with not enough reliance on rules. Allegations of corruption and nepotism in teacher recruitment were common. Many of these charges were based on facts. Two decades ago, reforms were introduced to move to more rules-based (merit-based) recruitment. This has definitely reduced the allegations, and litigation on recruitment issues has also decreased. But has it improved teacher and/or teaching quality? Has it improved student learning? And what unintended consequences has it led to? These are important follow-ups for completing the loop for feedback and continuous improvement. 'Merit'-based recruitment might reduce corruption, but does it allow us to differentiate between good and bad teachers? If not, the reform might be of limited value.

Many places worldwide have significant requirements for specific courses, diplomas and even degrees before a person can become a teacher. When we moved towards merit-based recruitment, provincial governments removed the requirements for education degrees before joining as a teacher. This has increased the pool of candidates for teaching (a physics graduate can come into teaching directly) but many of these applicants did not choose to be teachers and have no understanding of what teaching is: you can be good at physics but teach it badly. How has this impacted learning outcomes? Some jurisdictions even have teacher licensing.

Courtesy Dawn

A clear indictment

YET again, the UN Security Council's monitoring report on Afghanistan has painted a grim picture of the presence of transnational terrorist groups on Afghan territory. The report, a regular feature, reiterates that Afghanistan remains a staging ground for some of the most lethal terrorist outfits in the world. Pakistan, which has been a victim of the TTP, based in Afghanistan, has known this painful reality for years. The report notes that over 20 international and regional terrorist organisations currently call Afghanistan home. These include IS-K, Al Qaeda, the TTP and ETIM, among others. With the exception of IS-K, these groups have good relations with the Afghan Taliban. Importantly, the report says that the Taliban's claims that no militant groups are based on their soil are "not credible". For Pakistan, the TTP — largely due to the permissive environment it enjoys under Afghan Taliban rule — poses a major security challenge. The UN document says that the terrorist group has conducted over 600 attacks against this country in the current year. Moreover, TTP chief Noor Wali Mehsud is believed to spend time in Kabul, while other anti-Pakistan terrorists, such as Gul Bahadur, are also based in Afghanistan.

President welcomes UN experts' findings; says India's rogue behaviour can't be allowed to persist



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Friday welcomed the report issued by United Nations human rights experts, which raised serious concerns over India's military actions against Pakistan in May this year and its wider conduct affecting global peace and stability.

The president, in a statement, said the report reinforced Pakistan's longstanding position that the unilateral use of force across international borders constituted a violation of the United Nations Charter and a grave

breach of Pakistan's sovereignty. He said that the findings relating to civilian deaths, damage to populated areas and religious sites of Pakistan in May, and the heightened risk of escalation caused by India were deeply disturbing.

The president appreciated the report's observations on India's unilateral declaration of "holding in abeyance" its obligations under the Indus Waters Treaty, its aggressive posture and statements and the serious civilian losses resulting from Indian aggression.

He said the Treaty remained a binding international agreement and a cornerstone of regional stability, and stressed that bypassing agreed dispute-resolution mechanisms and actions affecting water flows violated Pakistan's rights and risked creating serious human rights consequences.

President Zardari said the report also reflects growing international

concerns over India's conduct as a rogue state that increasingly acts as a global bully, relying on coercion, intimidation and the normalisation of force and violence rather than law and dialogue.

He noted that serious reports of transnational violence and targeted killings attributed to India, raised in multiple countries, pointed to a dangerous pattern that extended beyond the region and undermined global norms.

The president expressed concern that the report clearly manifested the irresponsible state behaviour of India. "India has long stonewalled its minorities and ignored its commitments to international forums such as the United Nations, but this pattern of rogue behaviour cannot continue indefinitely," he said, and underscored that such behaviour cannot be allowed to persist. The president noted the report's clear conclusion that international law

Pakistan targets January for inaugural panda bond tranche, says finance ministry

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is targeting January to issue its first panda bond tranche, part of a planned programme of up to \$1 billion, the Ministry of Finance said on Friday, as Islamabad seeks to diversify funding sources and tap China's onshore debt market.

The inaugural issuance is expected to raise the equivalent of about \$250 million, with further tranches to follow under a phased programme once regulatory approvals are completed, the ministry said after Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb chaired a review meeting on the plan.

Approvals from multilateral partners have already been secured, and final clearances from Chinese regulators are expected by early January, the statement said.

The panda bond programme,



denominated in yuan and sold on China's domestic market, is part of Pakistan's broader debt management strategy as it works to stabilise its economy under a \$7 billion International Monetary Fund programme.

Pricing for the inaugural bond will be determined closer to the launch once all regulatory requirements are completed, the ministry said.

The finance ministry said engagement with Chinese institutional investors had been constructive, reflecting improving confidence.

NA Speaker reaffirms strong Pakistan-Maldives ties

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to strengthening bilateral relations with the Maldives during a meeting with Maldivian Vice President.

The parliamentary delegation, led by the Speaker, is currently on an official visit to the Republic of Maldives at the special invitation of the Speaker of the People's Majlis, Abdul Raheem Abdulla. As part of the visit, the Pakistani delegation also called on the President of the Republic of Maldives, Uz Hussain Mohamed Latheef, at the President's Office, underscoring the importance of parliamentary diplomacy in fostering closer ties between the two nations. Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq expressed his gratitude for the warm welcome extended by the Vice President, the People's Majlis and the Government of the Republic of Maldives. He stated that the hospitality accorded to the Pakistani delegation reflects the deep-rooted friendship, mutual respect, and strong bonds of brotherhood

between the peoples of Pakistan and the Maldives. The parliamentary delegation accompanying the NA Speaker comprises MNAs Salahuddin Junejo, Naveed Amir Jeeva, Mehmood Qadir Khan, Bilal Farooq Tarar, Muhammad Bilal Badar, and Daniyal Ahmed. Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq underscored the longstanding, close and cordial relations between Pakistan and the Maldives, based on shared religion, and strong people-to-people linkages. He reaffirmed Pakistan's firm commitment to further strengthening bilateral and parliamentary relations and emphasized the importance Pakistan attaches to its friendship with the Maldives. Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq highlighted cross-border terrorism as a serious regional and global challenge. He stated that Pakistan continues to face the menace of cross-border terrorism, including activities of Indian-sponsored Fitna-al-Khawarij, and emphasized that terrorism in all its forms and manifestations must be collectively addressed through coordinated regional and international efforts.



Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq along with Parliamentary delegation in a meeting with Vice President of Maldives Hussain Mohamed Latheef at Male, Maldives.

Sherry Rehman warns Indian actions could trigger major conflict in the region

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) leader Senator Sherry Rehman has said that India has failed to respond to the United Nations (UN), warning that Indian-sponsored terrorism could spark a major war in the region. Senator Sherry Rehman stated that the UN had given India time to respond, but it did not do so. She said India has been found involved in international terrorism, adding that Indian nationals were also linked to the Sydney shooting incident. She further said that the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) should also examine India's role in terrorism. According to a UN report, there are fears of the spread of major conflicts, and India has been found involved in terrorism as well as violations of the Indus Waters Treaty. On the occasion, Senator Bushra Anjum Butt said that Pakistan's narrative is gaining acceptance at the international level.

Netherlands' envoy calls on Governor Punjab

PEAK POINT

LAHORE: Ambassador of the Netherlands Robert Jan Sieger called on Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan at the Governor's House here on Thursday.

Discussions focused on enhancing bilateral cooperation in trade, education, agriculture, and environmental sectors, fostering stronger ties between the two countries. Speaking on the occasion, Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan said that Pakistan attaches great importance to its relations with the Netherlands. He underlined the need to further strengthen and expand bilateral relations between the two countries. The Governor Punjab said that there



are vast investment opportunities in various sectors including trade between Pakistan and the Netherlands. He said tourism and trade can be further expanded with direct flights between the two countries. Sardar Saleem Haider said Pakistan seeks to benefit from Dutch expertise in the field of water resources management. He said Pakistan has a very small share in climate change, but despite this, Pakistan has been greatly affected in the form of floods.

Governor KP visits Sundas Foundation Lahore, lauds free medical services for children

PEAK POINT

LAHORE: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi visited Sundas Foundation Lahore on Friday, where he met children undergoing treatment for blood-related diseases, inquired about their well-being, and distributed gifts among them to boost their morale. Upon his arrival, the Governor was warmly received by Patron of Sundas Foundation



Sohaib Warraich, Founder and President Muhammad Yasin Khan, Director Khalid Abbas Dar, and members of the foundation's management.

Pakistan, Portugal step up cooperation on Youth Jobs, Labour Mobility

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programme (PMYP) Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan on Thursday held a high-level meeting with H.E. Manuel Frederico Pinheiro da Silva, Ambassador of Portugal to Pakistan, at the Embassy of Portugal in Islamabad, to advance Pakistan-Portugal cooperation on youth employment, overseas labour mobility, skills development, and trade, with a shared focus on creating safe, legal and sustainable opportunities for young people.

The meeting focused on strengthening bilateral collaboration in productive employment and overseas workforce engagement, particularly aimed at empowering youth through structured labour mobility frame-



works. Both sides exchanged views on facilitating mutually beneficial employment pathways, skills recognition, and workforce development initiatives to meet evolving market demands.

Chairman Rana Mashhood emphasized the Government of Pakistan's strong commitment to

deepening relations with Portugal, both at the bilateral level and within the broader European Union framework.

The two sides reaffirmed their shared resolve to work together at multilateral forums in support of global peace, prosperity, and stability. Recalling the longstanding

friendship between the two countries, the meeting noted that Pakistan and Portugal established diplomatic relations on November 7, 1949, and have enjoyed cordial and friendly ties for more than 75 years. Both sides expressed satisfaction over the steady progress in bilateral engagement and agreed to further expand cooperation across diverse sectors. On trade and investment, it was noted that bilateral trade reached USD 221 million in 2024, reflecting a positive upward trend. While welcoming this growth, both sides acknowledged the significant untapped potential for expansion.

Special emphasis was placed on enhancing cooperation in the information technology sector, where collaboration between Pakistani and Portuguese firms could generate mutual gains.

In the court of Mujeeb-ur-Rehman Shami Civil Court Judge Mandi Bahauddin

Suit for Declaration Title Bashiran Widow VS Mian Khan ETC VS Mian Khan Late Son of LaLa Through Legal here's. Abid Hussain.Ghulam Awais son's Mian Khan.Muhammad Khan Son of Shera caste Gondal Residence Khana Tehsil and District Mandi Bahauddin effected through ordinary means so service of defendants be effected through proclamation in the newspaper. You defendants are directed to appear in court in person or through counsel 20/12/25 at 09:00 am in case of failure ex party proceedings shall be initiated against you.

In the court of Madam Naila Ayoub Civil Court judge MANDI BAHAUDDIN

Suit for Contempt of court TITLED Rani Rafiq ETC VS Azra Parveen ETC VS Muhammad Tauseef Son Riaz Ahmad caste Hanjra Residence of Bhakhi Sharif Tehsil and District Mandi Bahauddin effected through ordinary means so service of defendants be effected through proclamation in the newspaper. You defendants are directed to appear in court in person or through counsel 09/01/26 at 09:00 am in case of failure ex party proceedings shall be initiated against you.